

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1534

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations Subcommittee on Health & Human Services

Title: An act relating to the license surcharge for the impaired dentist program.

Brief Description: Increasing the impaired dentist program license or renewal surcharge.

Sponsors: Representatives Riccelli, Harris, Ryu and Jinkins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations Subcommittee on Health & Human Services: 2/14/13, 2/20/13 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the maximum surcharge on licensed dentists used to fund the impaired dentist program from \$25 to \$50.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Morrell, Chair; Harris, Ranking Minority Member; Cody, Green, Jinkins, Kagi, Ormsby, Pike, Ross and Schmick.

Staff: Mary Mulholland (786-7391).

Background:

The Dental Quality Assurance Commission (DQAC), the disciplining authority for licensed dentists in Washington, contracts with a voluntary substance abuse monitoring program for the purpose of implementing an impaired dentist program. The impaired dentist program may include referrals to substance abuse treatment, education and prevention, and post-treatment monitoring.

If the DQAC determines that the unprofessional conduct of a licensed dentist under investigation may be the result of substance abuse, the DQAC may refer the licensed dentist to the program in lieu of disciplinary action. By rule, the DQAC also permits licensed

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dentists who are not under investigation to voluntarily participate in the impaired dentist program.

The DQAC contract with the voluntary substance abuse monitoring program must be financed by a surcharge of up to \$25 on the initial applications or renewals of licensed dentists.

Summary of Bill:

The \$25 limit on the surcharge paid by licensed dentists for the impaired dentist program increases to \$50.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The increased surcharge would help ensure the long-term viability of the program by bringing the amount of the surcharge paid by licensed dentists in line with the surcharge paid by physicians and physician assistants. The program provides a very valuable service for the years it has been in place. There is some ambiguity over whether the statute authorizing the surcharge allows the Department of Health (Department) to apply the surcharge to initial licenses or renewals, or to initial licenses and renewals. The Department currently applies the surcharge to license renewals only.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Riccelli, prime sponsor; Linda Hull, Washington State Dental Association; and Karen Jensen, Department of Health.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.